



Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education  
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# Quidnessett Elementary School

NORTH KINGSTOWN

## THE SALT VISIT TEAM REPORT

January 14, 2005



### **School Accountability for Learning and Teaching (SALT)**

**The school accountability program of the Rhode Island Department of Education**

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## The Purpose and Limits of This Report

This is the report of the SALT team that visited Quidnessett Elementary School from January 10 to 14, 2005.

The SALT visit report makes every effort to provide your school with a valid, specific picture of how well your students are learning. The report also portrays how the teaching in your school affects learning, and how the school supports learning and teaching. The purpose of developing this information is to help you make changes in teaching and the school that will improve the learning of your students. The report is valid because the team's inquiry is governed by a protocol that is carefully designed to make it possible for visit team members to make careful judgments using accurate evidence. The careful exercise of professional judgment makes the findings useful for school improvement because these judgments identify where the visit team thinks the school is doing well, and where it is doing less well.

The major questions the team addressed were:

- ◆ *How well do students learn at Quidnessett Elementary School?*
- ◆ *How well does the teaching at Quidnessett Elementary School affect learning?*
- ◆ *How well does Quidnessett Elementary School support learning and teaching?*

The following features of this visit are at the heart of the report:

Members of the visit team are primarily teachers and administrators from Rhode Island public schools. The majority of team members are teachers. The names and affiliations of the team members are listed at the end of the report.

*The team sought to capture what makes this school work, or not work, as a public institution of learning. Each school is unique and the team has tried to capture what makes Quidnessett Elementary School distinct.*

*The team did not compare this school to any other school.*

*When writing the report, the team deliberately chose words that it thought would best convey its message to the school, based on careful consideration of what it had learned about the school.*

**The team reached consensus on each conclusion, each recommendation, and each commendation in this report.**

The team made its judgment explicit.

This report reflects only the week in the life of the school that was observed and considered by this team. The report is not based on what the school plans to do in the future or on what it has done in the past.

This school visit is supported by the Rhode Island Department of Education as a component of School Accountability for Learning and Teaching (SALT). To gain the full advantages of a peer visiting system, RIDE deliberately did not participate in the active editing of this SALT visit report. That was carried out by the team's Chair with the support of Catalpa. Ltd.

The team closely followed a rigorous protocol of inquiry that is rooted in Practice-based Inquiry™ (Catalpa Ltd). The detailed *Handbook for Chairs of the SALT School Visit, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition* describes the theoretical constructs behind the SALT visit and stipulates the many details of the visit procedures. The *Handbook* and other relevant documents are available at [www.Catalpa.org](http://www.Catalpa.org). Contact Rick Richards at (401) 222-4600 x 2194 or [ride0782@ride.ri.net](mailto:ride0782@ride.ri.net) for further information about the SALT visit protocol.

SALT visits undergo rigorous quality control. Catalpa Ltd. monitors each visit and determines whether the report can be endorsed. Endorsement assures the reader that the team and the school followed the visit protocol. It also assures that the conclusions and the report meet specified standards.

## Sources of Evidence

The Sources of Evidence that this team used to support its conclusions are listed in the appendix.

The team spent a total of over 102 hours in direct classroom observation. Most of this time was spent in observing complete lessons or classes. Almost every classroom was visited at least once, and almost every teacher was observed more than once. Also 22 hours were spent in conversations with teachers, staff and administration over the course of the visit.

The full visit team built the conclusions, commendations, and recommendations presented here through intense and thorough discussion. The team met for a total of 30 hours in team meetings spanning the five days of the visit. This time does not include the time the team spent in classrooms, with teachers, and in meetings with students, parents, and school and district administrators.

The team did agree by consensus that every conclusion in this report is:

- ◆ *Important enough to include in the report*
- ◆ *Supported by the evidence the team gathered during the visit*
- ◆ *Set in the present, and*
- ◆ *Contains the judgment of the team*

## Using the Report

This report is designed to have value to all audiences concerned with how Quidnessett Elementary School can improve student learning. However, the most important audience is the school itself.

How your school improvement team reads and considers the report is the critical first step. RIDE will provide a SALT Fellow to lead a follow-up session with the school improvement team to help start the process. With support from the North Kingstown School Improvement Coordinator and from SALT fellows, the school improvement team should carefully decide what changes it wants to make in learning, teaching, and the school, and amend its School Improvement Plan to reflect these decisions.

The North Kingstown School District, RIDE and the public should consider what the report says or implies about how they can best support Quidnessett Elementary School as it works to strengthen its performance.

Any reader of this report should consider the report as a whole. A reader who only looks at recommendations misses important information.

## **2. PROFILE OF QUIDNESSETT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

Quidnessett Elementary School is located at the end of a cul-de-sac in a quiet residential neighborhood in the town of North Kingstown in southern Rhode Island. The school opened its doors in 1971 as part of the North Kingstown School District. It is constructed with an open classroom design with partitions that separate the classrooms and that adjust easily to various classroom sizes. In 2001 a gymnasium, an art and a music room were added to the school.

The professional staff that services Quidnessett students includes a principal, thirteen full-time teachers, two part-time teachers, a school-based literacy coach, seven itinerant teachers, eight support staff, one clerk, fourteen paraprofessionals, two cafeteria servers, two full-time custodians, and one part-time custodian. The school has one full-time kindergarten class, one first grade class, two second grade classes, two third grade classes, three fourth grade classes, and three fifth grade classes. Two transitional classes - one at the primary level, another at the intermediate level - provide specialized services for students with autism and Pervasive Developmental Delay (PDD). Quidnessett Elementary School also educates students in grades four and five, who transfer from Davisville Elementary School.

Of the 244 children who attend the school, 87.7% are white, 4.5% are black, 3.3% are Asian, 2.9% are Native Americans, and 1.6% are Hispanic. Sixty-two students (26%) receive special education services, three students receive ESL support, and approximately 29% of the students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

The Quidnessett Elementary School faculty and staff implement several school wide programs and initiatives, including the SmART program for integrating the arts into the core curriculum, Kids-Write and 6+1 Traits programs for enhancing writing skills, Guided Reading and Reading Recovery to improve the reading proficiency of all students, and a problem solving focus in all subjects across the curriculum. The Quahog Program for “good deeds” promotes in students positive behavior and respect of self and others. Faculty and staff receive job-embedded professional development to support them in putting these programs and initiatives into action.

Students participate in various school activities during the school day, including reading buddies; chorus; band and string lessons; Student Council; and Lunch with the Principal. After school, they have opportunities to participate in Homework Club, Chance to Dance Club that culminates in attending a performance at the Providence Performing Arts Center, the Science Fair, an Art Exhibition, the Drama Club, concerts for chorus and band, and an Enrichment Program that allows students to hone a skill, learn a new language, play chess just for fun, or develop a skill such as sign language or cake decorating.

### **3. PORTRAIT OF QUIDNESSETT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT**

Quidnessett Elementary School is tucked inside a neighborhood at the end of Mark Drive. The woods surrounding the school give it a rural flavor. The uniqueness of this school shines brightly. The colorful hallways are bright and match the welcoming faces of staff and students. An enthusiastic and respectful atmosphere surrounds you as you walk through the school. The open classrooms allow everyone to flow from one area to another. The classrooms buzz with activities. The remarkably low volume of students' voices is quite striking. The teachers, students and staff all work together as a team, providing a quiet, respectful setting that fosters optimum learning. The students are motivated and hardworking. They blossom under the gentle guidance of a professional and nurturing staff.

Many new educational initiatives are underway here, which provide the staff with a potpourri of teaching strategies and programs including Guided Reading, 6+1 Traits, and SmART. Staff development in these initiatives helps to build the teachers' capacity to be effective. Leadership emerges on many levels. The principal, teachers and staff set high expectations for themselves and their work. The school principal states that the staff's dedication, their concern for their students, and their expertise makes her work easy.

And yet, Quidnessett Elementary School faces several challenges as the staff plans and implements the ambitious initiatives and programs that are underway here. The sheer number of initiatives can overwhelm the young staff at times. The faculty shifts that occur from year-to-year make it necessary to train new teachers as they arrive. Their training may not mirror the prior training of other teachers in the school. This results in an uneven implementation of programs such as Guided Reading. The implementation process for the Personal Literacy Plans (PLP) must be addressed in the areas of student identification and classroom support for the proper follow through of each plan. Also, if all stakeholders are to feel valued and safe, the staff and the administration need to communicate with one another more effectively.

## 4. FINDINGS ON STUDENT LEARNING

### Conclusions

Students at Quidnessett Elementary School are ardent readers. Most of them read well, whether they are working independently, in pairs or in small groups. They concentrate on the task at hand, successfully read materials at their individual levels, and excitedly share their reading projects. Students frequently make meaningful and interesting connections between their reading and their own lives, the world around them and other stories they have read. During small group instruction and read alouds, students eagerly predict, determine cause and effect, and infer. Students confidently talk with one another about strategies for reading, and they know how to use a variety of tools as they work to understand the text. They take responsibility for their own reading progress and show great maturity during demanding group activities such as literature circles. Students in all grades successfully choose books that are “just right” for independent reading. Even better, they feel free to reject the books they have selected; if they critically judge that they are not appropriate or interesting. Additionally, they construct impressive responses to literature using various media that include storyboards, character posters, quadramas, and Hyperstudio presentations. Students say that their “horizons have been widened” to select books across a wide range of genres. These attitudes, skills and activities help to explain why a large percentage of students met or exceeded the standard on the 2004 New Standards Reference Examination reading subtests. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, meeting with the students, reviewing 2004 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries, reviewing classroom assessments, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing classroom textbooks)*

Students write extensively throughout the day. Most students write proficiently and show steady growth from grade level to grade level. They use writing to express their feelings, respond to literature, explain their thinking, and share events. Students enjoy writing personal letters to their teachers in their journals and do so effectively. They successfully use voice in these entries and eagerly look forward to receiving personal letters from their teachers in return. Students develop the skills to be competent editors of their own work as they analyze their writing and learn from their mistakes. They are proud of their work and eager to show it to others. They use the print rich environment in their classrooms to support them as they spell difficult words. As they learn new words, they make connections and see patterns. They know how to use tools such as graphic organizers to enhance their writing. Students write well-organized papers that show they know how to use the conventions of writing effectively. Although students write often, in some of their structured pieces they lose voice; they write as though they are “filling in the blanks.” Notwithstanding, the 2004 New Standards Reference Examination results show that students are highly successful in writing effectiveness (84% met or exceeded the standard) and writing conventions (74% met or exceeded the standard). *(following students, observing classes, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, observing the school outside of the classroom, talking with students and teachers, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing classroom assessments, reviewing 2004 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries)*



Students at every grade level learn to problem solve skillfully. They express their mathematical thinking verbally, as well as in drawings, and writing, and they do so in many settings and subjects. They know how to explain various problem-solving strategies and make good choices when selecting the most appropriate strategy to solve the problem at hand. They diligently solve real world problems such as making mathematical conversions, determining distances and creating budgets. Students discover “the rule,” such as adding odd and even numbers, sorting attributes, and determining what makes a polygon, through their problem solving activities. They comfortably use various tools such as calculators, manipulatives, and geoboards, as they recognize that there are various ways to solve the same problem. They are at ease working at centers and playing appropriate math games to determine solutions. Students enthusiastically add new strategies to their toolkits. Moreover, students performed well on the 2004 New Standards Reference Examination in math, as 26% met the standard with honors and 41% met the standard on the problem-solving subtest. *(following students, observing classes, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, talking with students and teachers, meeting with students, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing classroom assessments, reviewing 2004 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries)*

Quidnessett Elementary School students are enthusiastic learners working diligently to succeed in their work. Students construct their understandings by inquiring, taking risks, expressing their opinions, and by working independently on other assignments after they have finished their work. They have a “can do” attitude and confidently try to do their best in all subject areas. “I can do it, it’s easy!” is a phrase that is commonly heard throughout the school. The children know what resources to use if they have difficulty. They learn at their individual levels with opportunities to excel. They are polite and active listeners, who are participants in their own learning. A feeling of respect and acceptance emanates from the students as they help one another, wait their turns, and listen to one another. Many say “thank you,” “please” and “excuse me.” These important academic, emotional, and social attributes enable them to meet goals they set for themselves and to learn at their optimal levels. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, talking with students, teachers, and school administrator, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school administrator, and parents)*

### Important Thematic Findings in Student Learning

Students:

- ◆ *Are independent, capable learners*
- ◆ *Are enthusiastic, confident, and resourceful*
- ◆ *Make important connections in their learning*
- ◆ *Demonstrate respect and acceptance*

## 5. FINDINGS ON TEACHING FOR LEARNING

### Conclusions

Teachers at Quidnessett Elementary School successfully foster a love of reading in their students. They differentiate their instruction to help students attain the maximum growth. To determine how to group students appropriately, teachers actively assess student progress using running records, standardized testing and their daily observations of student performance. During small group instructional time, they further their students' growth by providing lessons on specific skills such as decoding and vocabulary development. Classroom teachers collaborate with other teachers and make effective use of special educators, paraprofessionals, parent volunteers, the literacy coach, and SmART personnel to get the job done. This ensures that students have the support they need to hone their skills. Teachers provide their students with activities such as letter writing, discussions, and presentations to encourage them to respond to literature. They capably instruct students a variety of comprehension skills, such as making connections, predicting and visualizing - to name a few. As a result, students artfully demonstrate their developing expertise in these critical reading skills when they write about or discuss their reading throughout the day. Teachers' effective daily instruction provides students with the strategies they need to become successful lifelong readers. *(following students, observing classes, reviewing classroom assessments, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing district and school policies, reviewing school improvement plan, talking with students and teachers)*

It is clear that teachers effectively integrate writing activities into all subjects. They use a variety of programs and techniques to help students accomplish the writing goals they have set. However, when teachers adhere strictly to the new writing program frameworks, their students' writing pieces are stilted. Teachers are not yet comfortable with these programs or knowledgeable about them. They capably model writing in their morning messages and their responses to students' journal entries, and their benchmark papers. Through the use of rubrics, as well as their written and oral comments, teachers provide meaningful feedback to students concerning the quality of their writing. They provide grade level appropriate instruction on various components of the writing process. Teachers purposefully teach a variety of writing genres, such as narratives and poetry, to help students develop writing skills for authentic purposes and audiences. Teachers display finished student work, along with supporting evidence from brainstorming to the scored rubric, which exemplify students' best efforts. Teachers purposefully make the connection between reading and writing by providing opportunities for children to respond to literature through writing. All of these teaching activities contribute to Quidnessett Elementary School students becoming more proficient writers. *(following students, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing school improvement plan, talking with students, teachers, school administrator)*

Teachers across the grade levels incorporate a school wide framework for teaching problem solving strategies with ease. They use multiple ways to help students understand alternate ways to solve problems and to explain their mathematical thinking. They make it safe for students to take risks and teach them the skills to work independently, as well as in groups. Teachers provide students with meaningful, authentic tasks. They use appropriate paper and pencil activities to help students understand basic math concepts, interpret data, solve problems, and explain their thinking. Teachers provide ongoing assessments that include the effective and frequent use of rubrics, criteria charts, and individual feedback. Through these, they provide students with clear expectations for their work and effectively assist them to become more proficient problem solvers. *(following students, observing classes, reviewing school improvement plan, meeting with the school improvement team, discussing student work with teachers, observing the school outside of the classroom, reviewing classroom assessments, reviewing completed and ongoing student work)*

Teachers at Quidnessett Elementary School are dedicated and hard-working individuals who have a genuine love of teaching. They are energetic, enthusiastic professionals, who are eager to collaborate to improve their craft. Teachers instill their own “can do” attitudes in their students. They conscientiously ensure a nurturing environment for their students, which fosters individual growth. Teachers have a strong bond with one another that enables them to grow and support each other as a team. A school banner typifies their collegial attitude, “United we learn, together we work.” *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, talking with students, teachers, and school administrator, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school administrator, and parents)*

### **Commendations for Quidnessett Elementary School**

Hardworking, dedicated teachers

Teachers with a “can do” attitude

Effective differentiation of instruction

Strong collegiality

Effective use of support personnel

High expectations for students and themselves

### **Recommendations for Quidnessett Elementary School**

Maintain your collegial learning community.

Continue to create a safe environment that encourages students to take risks.

Continue to involve the entire school community in the educational process.

Keep holding students to high expectations.

Persist in developing your understanding and delivery of the writing and reading programs.

### **Recommendations for North Kingstown School District**

Acknowledge the hard work of all the teachers and staff at Quidnessett Elementary School.

## 6. FINDINGS ON SCHOOL SUPPORT FOR LEARNING AND TEACHING

### Conclusions

By all measurable indicators Quidnessett Elementary School is a community where everyone is doing everything “right” to make it a High Performing and Improving school. The principal leads an energetic staff that is firmly committed to the implementation of the current initiatives. The district administration is genuinely attempting to build capacity within the district schools by providing frequent and pertinent professional development. Nevertheless, teachers report that these initiatives are sometimes daunting and overwhelming. And yet, they continue to work hard to implement them as best as they can. The support personnel are earnestly filling any needed gaps with their talents and resources; the parents are fully invested in their children’s education; and most importantly, the students have eagerly given their best efforts to learning through problem solving, writing and reading initiatives. *(talking with teachers and school administrator, meeting with the school and district administrators and parents, reviewing 2004 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries)*

And yet, the school climate is hard to measure and equally important. An obvious link is missing in the chain of communication. The expressed need for continuous, clear, honest, two-way communication between the principal and the faculty is the most important issue facing the school at this time. The principal reports that her teachers and staff are doing an incredible job in educating the students. However, teachers say that their concerns and suggestions are not always heard. They are not always sure where they stand with the principal, professionally or personally. The faculty needs reassurance and gentle guidance from their leader. Teachers say they would benefit from a climate of trust, which would include frequent, productive, clear, honest, and open communication between the administration and themselves. *(talking with teachers, observing the school outside of the classroom, meeting with school administrator)*

During their reading blocks, all teachers make a concerted effort to implement the district mandated guided reading program and strategies. The school improvement plan indicates that the school is working to help teachers become comfortable and knowledgeable about guided reading. However, teachers are not completely knowledgeable and comfortable with all of the components of this program at this time. Therefore, this is not consistently implemented from teacher to teacher or from grade level to grade level, causing students to have “gaps” in their reading instruction. Not all teachers have been trained in a uniform approach to this program. Teachers say they need consistent training and they need time to learn their craft. Nevertheless, they work together diligently as they attempt to provide students with daily reading time with peers of similar ability levels. *(following students, observing classes, talking with students, teachers, meeting with the school improvement team, school and district administrators, reviewing school improvement plan, reviewing district and school policies, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing completed and ongoing student work)*

The implementation of personal literacy plans for students with reading deficiencies is in its infancy in both the school and the district. The district has developed a plan for implementation. Intermediate grade teachers express concerns over their lack of time to meet the needs of those PLP students who read *significantly below* grade level. The new literacy coach effectively models strategies for classroom teachers in order to increase their capacity to address the needs of all students. However, teachers have concerns about the lack of expert support for PLP students on a daily basis. The number of PLP students in their classes overwhelms some teachers. They say they are not always able to provide concentrated, sustained intervention to move these students who read significantly below grade level toward more proficient levels of reading. Despite this, the dedicated teachers at Quidnessett Elementary School incorporate the resources and expertise available within their school community to provide instruction to those students. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with district administrators, parents, talking with teachers, and school administrator, reviewing district and school policies)*

The entire staff and parents at this school have embraced the SmART Program - a standards based, whole school reform initiative endorsed by the district. Parents comment that the integration of this program extends the "breadth of education and involves more than just pushing for test scores." This noteworthy program employs theater, music, dance/drama, and the visual arts. It encourages teamwork and expression through multiple intelligences, and it provides all students with expanded opportunities to learn. Classroom teachers and specialists collaborate and co-teach in an effort to integrate lessons that use the arts in tandem with the core curriculum. Quidnessett Elementary students have commented that they "love" the program. As one parent said, "My daughter blossomed within the program, and it gets her out of bed and eager to come to school." Staff members report that SmART "projects take learning out of the box." As one satisfied parent said, "Quidnessett Elementary School is SmART in more ways than one!" *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, meeting with the students, school and district administrators, parents, talking with students, teachers, and school administrator, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers)*

The Transitional Classroom Program (TCP) receives a high level of support from the entire school community, including the district and school administrations and the parents. Teachers incorporate a wide variety of strategies and methods into the program to maximize the students' success. The school staff provides inclusion opportunities for all TCP students. Everyone within the school community welcomes and supports the TCP students. Collaboration to facilitate the growth and development of these students is a high priority amongst the TCP staff. They are devoted to their professional growth to enhance the delivery of the program, and they show a very high level of commitment to their students. The effectiveness of the teachers and paraprofessionals in the program is evident in the fact that four of their students achieved the standard (two with honors) on the Alternate Assessment of the New Standards Reference Exam for 2004. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, reviewing 2004 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries, reviewing district and school policies, reviewing records of professional development activities, talking with teachers and paraprofessionals, reviewing SALT Team binder)*

**Commendations for Quidnessett Elementary School**

Concerted effort to implement district initiatives

Dedicated paraprofessionals

High performing and improving school

SmART Program

Transition classrooms

**Recommendations for Quidnessett Elementary School**

Improve two-way communication in the school so that all staff are heard and their work is supported.

Find a common vision for the guided reading program, and provide a unified approach for teaching it. Get additional professional development to accomplish this goal.

Provide additional expert support for teachers who have PLP students in their classrooms.

Support teachers as they implement the current initiatives.

Continue the Transition Classrooms and SmART programs.

**Recommendations for North Kingstown School District**

Continue to build on the present initiatives, and give the staff time to become knowledgeable and comfortable with them.

Offer this staff the necessary professional development training and the follow up it needs for all initiatives.

## 7. FINAL ADVICE TO QUIDNESSETT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Quidnessett Elementary School is blessed with a caring, energetic staff that is eager to learn and improve. You have created a kid-friendly environment, where, by your modeling, students learn how to take risks, how to learn from their mistakes, and how to strive to reach their goals. Keep up your dedication and hard work. Continue to use the collaborative ties you have developed, and build on your strengths.

Keep all lines of communication open in an effort to continue to grow and learn as educators. Develop clear, continuous and honest two-way communication so that a climate of trust and understanding will flourish.

Your students have internalized the saying, “I can do it, it’s easy!” Keep that “can do” attitude and hold on to your love of learning. You have made great progress this year, and we wish you well as you continue the journey. But do remember to pause and consider what you have achieved. Be sure to celebrate your hard work, your accomplishments, and one another. Continue to be *united as **you** learn* and *together as **you** work*.

## ENDORSEMENT OF SALT VISIT TEAM REPORT

### Quidnessett Elementary School

January 14, 2005

Catalpa Ltd. monitors all SALT visits and examines each SALT visit team report to determine whether it should be endorsed as a legitimate SALT report. The endorsement decision is based on procedures and criteria specified in *Endorsing SALT Visit Team Reports*. (available on Catalpa website). Catalpa Ltd. bases its judgment about the legitimacy of a report on these three questions:

Did the SALT visit team and the host school conduct the visit in a manner that is reasonably consistent with the protocol for the visit?

Do the conclusions of the report meet the tests for conclusions specified in the visit protocol (important, accurate, set in present, shows the team's judgment)?

Does the report meet the tests for a report as specified in the visit protocol (fair, useful, and persuasive of productive action)?

Using the answers to these questions, the final decision to endorse the report answers the overall endorsement question: Is this a legitimate SALT team visit report? In order to make this determination, Catalpa weighs all the questions and issues that have been raised to decide whether a report is legitimate or not. While it is possible that a challenge related to one of the three questions listed above would be serious enough to withhold or condition the endorsement, it is more likely that issues serious enough to challenge a report's legitimacy will cut across the three questions.

While the SALT visit protocol requires that all SALT visits are conducted to an exceptionally high standard of rigor, visits are "real-life" events; it is impossible to control for all unexpected circumstances that might arise. The protocol for the conduct of the visit is spelled out in the *Handbook for SALT Visit Chairs*, 1<sup>st</sup> edition.

Since unexpected circumstances might result in either the team or the school straying too far from the protocol for a visit, Catalpa monitors both the school and the team during a visit regarding the conduct of the visit.

Most often actual visit events or issues do not challenge a report's legitimacy and Catalpa's monitoring and endorsement is routine. A district administrator, principal, faculty member or parent may not like a report, or think it is too negative, or think the visit should have been conducted in a manner that is not consistent with the protocol. None of these represent a challenge to a report's legitimacy; concerns that might challenge an endorsement are based on events that stray too far from the protocol.



The Catalpa review of this visit and this report was routine.

The steps Catalpa completed for this review were:

- discussion with the chair about any issues related to the visit before it began
- daily discussion of any issues with the visit chair during the visit
- observation of a portion of the visit
- discussion with the principal regarding any concerns about the visit at the time of the visit
- thorough review of the report in both its pre-release and final version form

The findings from the review are:

1. This team was certified to meet team membership requirements by RIDE staff.
2. This report was produced by a legitimate SALT Visit that was led by a trained SALT Visit Chair and conducted in a manner that is consistent with SALT Visit procedures.
3. The conclusions are legitimate SALT visit conclusions.
4. The report is a legitimate SALT visit report.

Accordingly, Catalpa Ltd. endorses this report.



Thomas A. Wilson, EdD  
Catalpa Ltd.  
February 3, 2005

## REPORT APPENDIX

### Sources of Evidence for This Report

In order to write this report the team examined test scores, student work, and other documents related to this school. The school improvement plan for Quidnessett Elementary School was the touchstone document for the team. No matter how informative documents may be, however, there is no substitute for being at the school while it is in session—in the classrooms, in the lunchroom, and in the hallways. The team built its conclusions primarily from information about what the students, staff, and administrators think and do during their day. Thus, this visit allowed the team to build informed judgments about the teaching, learning, and support that actually takes place at Quidnessett Elementary School.

The visit team collected its evidence from the following sources of evidence:

- ◆ *direct classroom observation*
- ◆ *observing the school outside of the classroom*
- ◆ *following seven students for a full day*
- ◆ *observing the work of teachers and staff for a full day*
- ◆ *meeting at scheduled times with the following groups:*
  - teachers*
  - school improvement team*
  - school and district administrators*
  - students*
  - parents*
- ◆ *talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators*
- ◆ *reviewing completed and ongoing student work*
- ◆ *interviewing teachers about the work of their students*
- ◆ *analyzing state assessment results as reported in Information Works!*
- ◆ *reviewing the following documents:*
  - district and school policies and practices*
  - Agreement Between The North Kingstown School Committee and the National Education Association, September 1, 2004-August 31, 2007*
  - NKSD Progress Report Grades 1-5 Parent Handbook*
  - NKSD Mentoring Program and Mentee Handbook*
  - NKSD Elementary School Handbook 2004-2005*
  - NKSD Policies and Procedures binder*
  - NKSD District Strategic Plan*
  - NKSD Professional Development Calendar*
  - NKSD Superintendent's Budget Fiscal Year 2004-2005*
  - North Kingstown Curriculum Guide Pamphlets, Grades K-5*

*Quidnessett Elementary School Disaggregated Data, 1998-2004*  
*records of professional development activities*  
*classroom assessments*  
*school improvement plan for Quidnessett Elementary School*  
*various curriculum guides*  
*School Newsletters binder*  
*PTO binder*  
*YMCA binder*  
*Self Study binder*  
*Quidnessett Elementary School Yearbooks*  
*QES SmART Integration Lessons*  
*SALT Team binders*  
*Extra Curricular Activities binder*  
*Classroom Interventions binder*  
*Monthly Newsletters information binder*  
*Personal Literacy Portfolios*  
*Faculty-Staff Meeting Agendas binder*  
*Student Council Meetings binder*  
*Grade Level Team Meeting Notes binder*  
*C.O.Z. binder*  
*PAT Parent Newsletters binder*  
*Reading: Literacy Coaching and Reading Recovery binder*  
*district strategic plan*  
*classroom textbooks*  
*2003 and 2004 SALT Survey reports*  
*2004 Information Works!*  
*2004 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries*  
*2004 Rhode Island Writing Assessment results*  
*School and District Report Cards*

### **State Assessment Results for Quidnessett Elementary School**

Assessment results create pieces of evidence that the visit team uses as it conducts its inquiry. The team uses this evidence to shape its efforts to locate critical issues for the school. It also uses this evidence, along with other evidence, to draw conclusions about those issues.

This school's results are from the latest available state assessment information. It is presented here in four different ways:

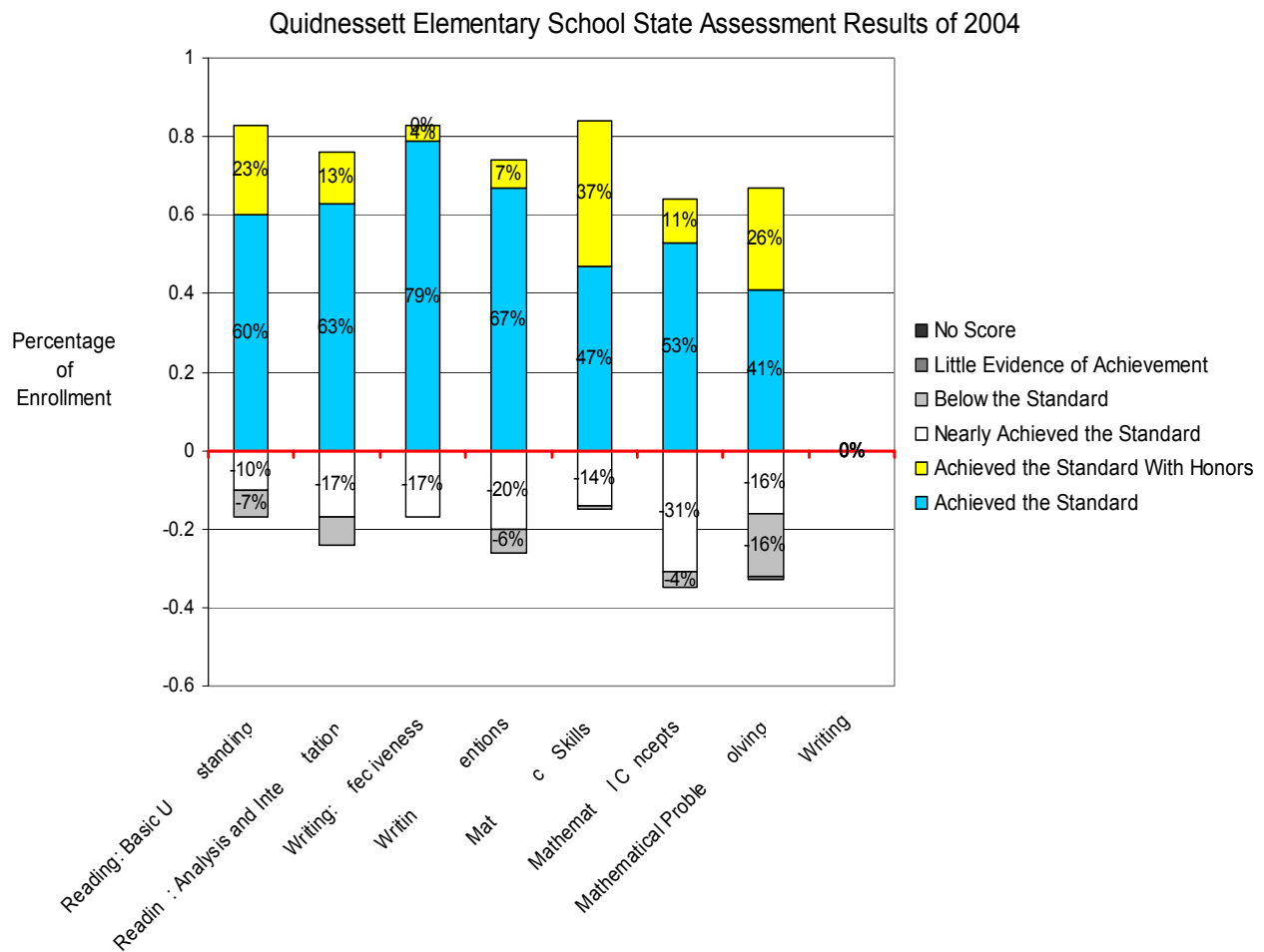
- ◆ *against performance standards;*
- ◆ *compared to similar students in the state;*

- ◆ across student groups within the school;
- ◆ and over time.

#### RESULTS IN RELATION TO PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

The first display shows how well the students do in relation to standards in English/Language Arts and mathematics. Student results are shown as the percentage of students taking the test whose score places them in the various categories at, above, or below the performance standard. Endorsed by the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education in 1998, the tested standards can be found in the publication *New Standards Performance Standards*.

**Table 1. 2003-2004 Student Results on Rhode Island State Assessments**

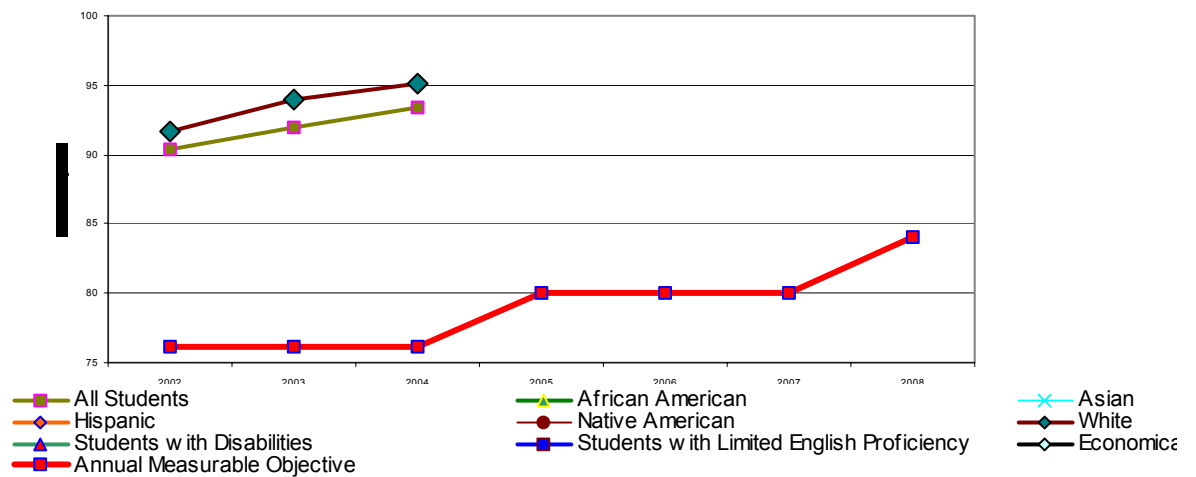


# RESULTS ACROSS STUDENT GROUPS WITHIN THE SCHOOL

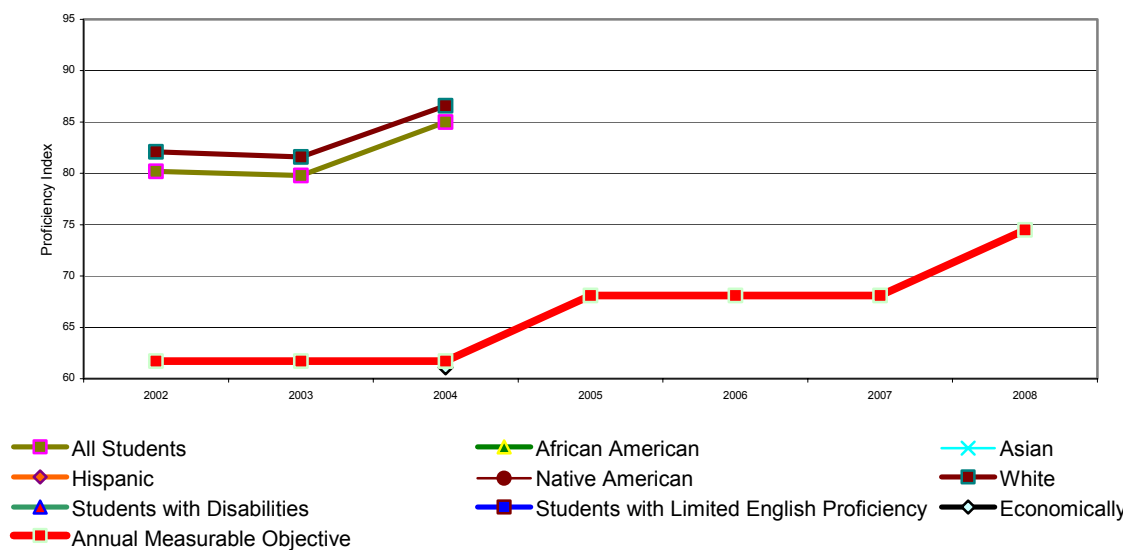
An important way to display student results is across different groups of students who are in the school. This display shows targets and index scores and reflects the new requirements of the No Child Left Behind federal legislation. Since breaking students into these smaller groups can result in groups becoming too small to show accurate results, this display shows groups with 45 or more students across three years of testing. Any student group whose index scores do not meet the targets set by RIDE requires additional attention to close its performance gaps.

*Table 2. 2003-2004 Student Results across Subgroups*

Annual Proficiency, Quidnessett Elementary School, ELA, Gr. 4



Annual Proficiency, Quidnessett Elementary School, Gr. 4 Math



REPORT CARD FOR QUIDNESSETT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

This Report Card show the performance of Quidnessett Elementary School compared to the school's annual measurable objectives (AMO).

These report card scores describe Quidnessett Elementary School as a high performing and improving school.

*Table 4. 2003-2004 Report Card for Quidnessett Elementary School*

INDEX PROFICIENCY SCORE, 2002-04	ENGLISH LANG. ARTS <b>TARGET SCORE: 76.1</b>				MATHEMATICS <b>TARGET SCORE: 61.7</b>			
STUDENT GROUP	THIS SCHOOL	TARGET MET?	THIS DISTRICT	THE STATE	THIS SCHOOL	TARGET MET?	THIS DISTRICT	THE STATE
All Students	93.4	YES	92.7	86.1	85	YES	84.5	77.5
African Americans	*	YES	*	77.8	*	YES	*	65.9
Asian	*	YES	*	84.5	*	YES	*	77.1
Hispanic	*	YES	*	75.8	*	YES	*	65.8
Native Americans	*	YES	*	83.9	*	YES	*	73
White	95.1	YES	93.2	88.5	86.6	YES	85.4	82
Students with Disabilities	*	YES	81	69.5	*	YES	78.3	66.4
Students with Limited English Proficiency	*	YES	*	68.9	*	YES	*	61
Students who are Economically Disadvantaged	*	YES	82.7	77.8	*	YES	80	68.4

PERCENT OF STUDENTS TESTED, 2002-04	<b>Target: 95%</b>			
	THIS SCHOOL	TARGET MET?	THIS DISTRICT	THE STATE
English Language Arts	100	YES	99.8	99.1
Mathematics	100	YES	99.7	99.4

ATTENDANCE RATE	<b>Target: 90%</b>			
	THIS SCHOOL	TARGET MET?	THIS DISTRICT	THE STATE
	96.5	YES	96.3	94.8

TARGETS MET/MISSED, THIS SCHOOL		
	TARGETS MET	TARGETS MISSED
English Language Arts Index Score	9	0
Mathematics Index Score	9	0
Percent Tested	2	0
Attendance Rate	1	0
<p><b>THIS SCHOOL IS CLASSIFIED AS:</b></p> <p><b>High Performing and Improving</b></p>		

Information Works! data for Quidnessett Elementary School is available at <http://www.ridoe.net>.

**THE QUIDNESSETT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT TEAM**

Louise Denette, Principal

Allison Bartholomay, Grade 3 Teacher

Robyn Cook, Grade 4 Teacher

Lynn Downey, Physical Education Teacher

Kenny Duva, Special Education Teacher

Kim Ferguson, Grade K Teacher

Amanda Ferriola, Grade 2 Teacher

Brian Garrepy, Grade 5 Teacher

Ellen Paster, Parent

Amy Strickland, Grade 1 Teacher

Liz Tully, Clerk

Kerry Wicker, Paraprofessional

**MEMBERS OF THE SALT VISIT TEAM**

Margaret M. Della Bitta  
Science Teacher  
South Kingstown High School  
on leave to the  
Office of School Improvement and Support Services  
Rhode Island Department of Education  
Regents SALT Fellow  
Team Chair

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Wakefield Elementary School  
South Kingstown, Rhode Island

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Grade 1 Teacher  
Bradford School  
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Gail Dandurand  
Grade 3 Teacher  
Hope Valley Elementary School  
Hope Valley, Rhode Island  
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Charlestown Elementary School  
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